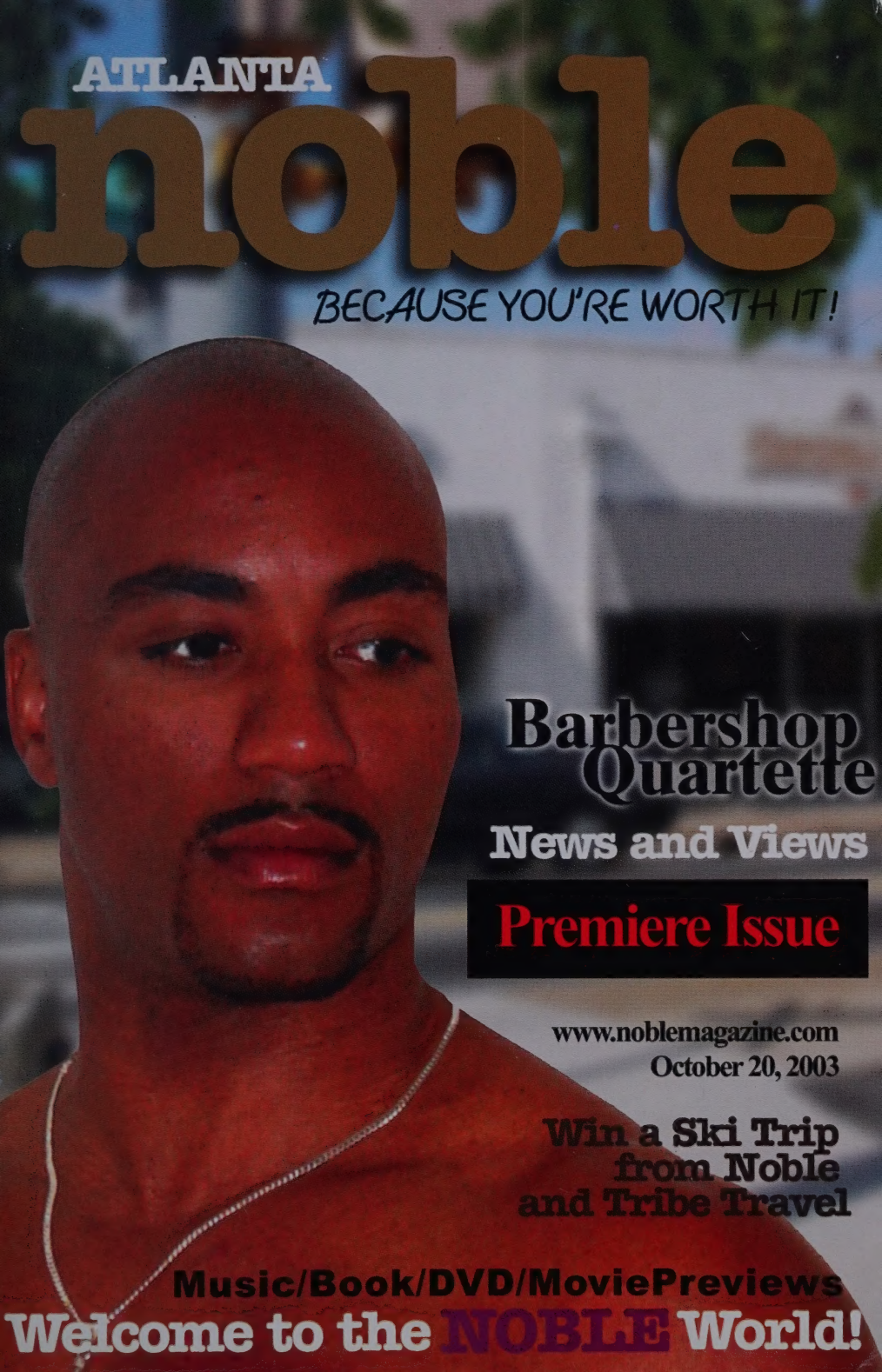
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EDITOR'S NOTE

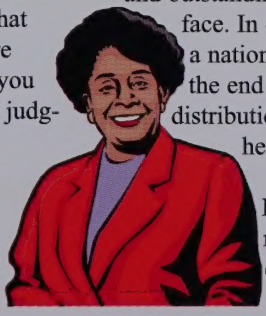
Noble Nubians

Well, come on in!

- Erick Davis

Many of us have great memories of the older woman in our neighborhood that always had our best interests at heart. This was no doubt the woman (at times a man) who truly understood us before we understood ourselves. They'd often invite us in, perhaps to hang out with their kids, have a glass of Kool-Aid, something to eat, show them the latest dance or just some general conversation to enhance the silent connection.

There have been some great people in our culture and lives that have indeed loved us and we MUST remember them and focus in on their generosity. Ironically, didn't it always seem that they gave you that "look" as if they knew early on what time it was but they were still willing to embrace you as a person first without judging you?



In our upbringing, we have often heard about "community" but that is a word that has often been meaningless to many of us. We were the children with no homes and grew up to be more independent than our brothers or sisters could ever be. We knew that we had to survive.

Noble is a magazine that would like to get back to that sister or brother in the neighborhood who saw you for YOU.

Our goal is to consistently embrace the rich African American GLBT culture in the Atlanta (and surrounding) areas with the credit that we all deserve. While Noble will be primarily distributed in Atlanta our goal is to connect with over 10 Black Gay Prides in 2004 to bring Noble to each one and meet you, our creative, talented and outstanding readers face to face. In essence, we will be a national publication by the end of 2004 at many distribution points with your help.

In our research, many of you have expressed your

Continued on page 12

writer's BLOCK

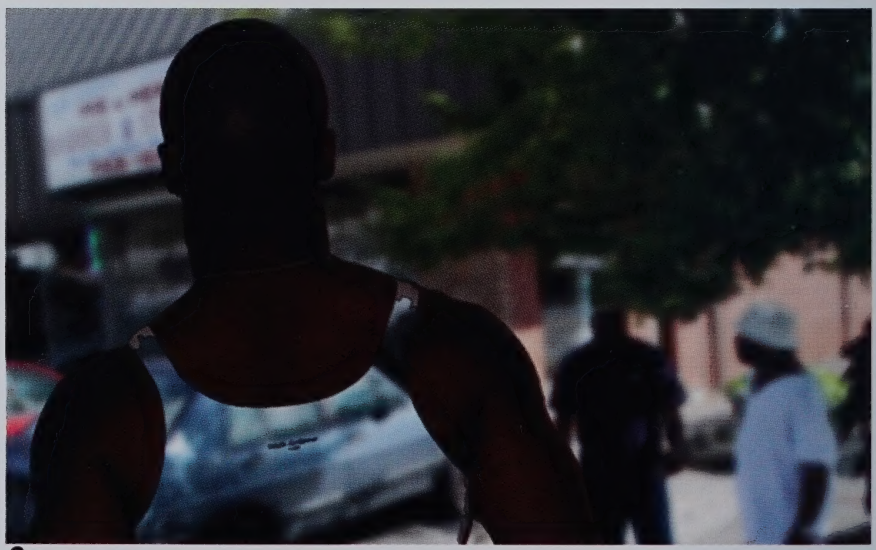
The Writer's Block *is a section that we allow readers to express themselves in. You can talk about love, life, pain, happiness and frustration. Readers are welcomed to write in their opinions and responses to featured writers. Send your entries to block@noblemagazine.com. Must be 1000 to 3000 words.*

Barbershop Quartette:

Damn, Can They See Through Me?

- David Lee Hamilton

It's been a long day and I am on my way home. It's not quite 8pm yet and the Barbershop closes at 8:30. Damn, perhaps I can get in to get a quick haircut before they close and the crowd has probably died down, I surmise. I then walk into the strip mall, past the convenience store and I'm headed to the shop when on my way, I notice several brothers standing in front of the shop laughing and givin' each other aggressive hand grips with hugs as they greet each other. "Nigga" comes out of each mouth as they compare rims and talk about basketball, women as they constantly adjust their balls and hold the same court that



has been held by the generations of black men before them in the exact same spot. At that moment, my auto programming goes into play and I begin to get more aggressively masculine with each step. Not to say I'm sashaying like Beyonce` down the street but my everyday walk becomes slower and more of a choreographed stomp then the proud and tall 'how the hell are you' stroll I am used to. I am jumping into character; I began to harden my approach and become what I never really was but was always expected, designed and required to be. I'm so sick of this, but what choice do I really have?

Fortunately, they are all interrupted when a fine sister's click and clack of her designer beige pumps echo through the courtyard as she knowingly strolls by with a the kind of shapely, large hips that dominate the mentality of brothers for the entire visual procedure. She is going to her car, jiggling her keys and poping her gum with enough attitude to feed a small town.

They each look in her direction and call out to her, as if perhaps she would even CONSIDER being a fool for a quick sexual encounter but the proud walk and her clear destination's focus immediately puts them on the back burner as she waves her hand at them as if they are annoying her. 'Not today, or in this life, baby' her attitude indicates as they forget about her just as quickly as they call her out. EXACTLY what she predicted in the first place?

In the transition she looks at me, and gives me that once-over that indicates 'You're different.' Then that turns to 'Oh, OK, I get it' I've been clocked by her intuition. The look is always somewhat blank and shoulder-shrugging as if she is telling me, 'Hmm, too bad, it's your thing baby, just be careful,' I want to tell her the same thing and I do without uttering a single word. Her message is crystal clear. But when I change my focus and look over to the brothers, they are each already honing in on my presence and giving me a different look then they just gave her. The look of disapproval. I've seen each one of those looks before on these four straight brothers. One is outright disdain that is territorial and quickly indicates that I better not even look his way. Two more are 'you're not one of us and we're cool as long as you keep your distance' and then there's always the one that says 'We could be cool man, I could take you at face value but my boys ain't down wit chu!'

I've been clocked. I give my best head nod to them KNOWING they have all just dissed me but I am still seeking what they will never

give me... approval and acceptance. I ask myself the same question that I have asked myself 10 thousand times, why do I keep doing this to myself, this is what con-

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events

People, Places and Events

Noble Magazine is constantly looking for events and happenings for the diverse African American and Latino GLBT community as well as the rest of the world. While all events will not be specifically African American or Latino or GLBT events, we will post events that we feel you would be interested in attending or viewing pictures from. Please submit your materials to editor@noblemagazine.com.

Gregory Hines Tribute

- By Keith L Forest

Stars shined brightly at the world famous Apollo Theater recently to celebrate one of the entertainment industries most beloved performers - Gregory Hines. The star-studded affair, hosted by former dance partner and brother Maurice Hines, featured a spectacular line up of Broadway talent and a who's who list of entertainment luminaries. The show kicked off with a warm greeting from the Apollo Theater president Jonelle Procope and a splendid overture from Sherrie Mircale and The Diva Jazz Orchestra. The celebration continued with tap improvisation by a group of extraordinary tap dancers and an uplifting gospel performance from The Broadway Gospel Choir. Solo performance included Broadway tunes sung by Leslie Ugamms, Diahann Carroll, Andre DeShields, Freda Payne and Ann Duquesnay. Hoofers Jason Smith, who performed a sizzling number entitled "Hot Feet," and Savion Glover brought the house down with their solo tap performance honoring Gregory Hines' legendary tap style. Mercedes Ellington joined Maurice Hines for a touching rendition of "Sophisticated Lady" and Chita Rivera strolled on stage with Ann Reinking for a top hat performance of "Nowaday". Attending celebrities included Debbie Allen, Mikhail Barishnikov, Roscoe Lee Brown, Jasmine Guy, Ruby Dee & Ossie Davis, Nicole Kidman, Lenny Kravitz, Denzel Washington, Eartha Kitt, Geoffrey Holder, Michelle Lee, Congressman Charles Rangel, Isabella Rosselini, Tommy Tune and a host of other family members and friends.

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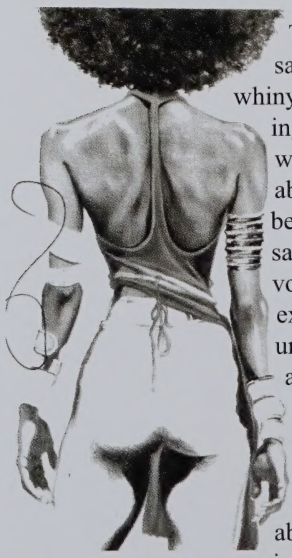
*****	No Doubt!
****	Aiiight
***	I'm Cool
**	(blank)
*	Not Happenin'

eyes & ears

Erykah Badu
*****
Worldwide Underground
Motown
(illustration by juan austin)



There are those who say that her, at-times, whiny delivery is irritating but as musicians we know the vocal ability of Badu and believe it when we say, she does have the voice. She is certainly expressing her unmatched creativity as she has done for all previous CDs and this one is no different. The first cut "Bump it" is about a recording session gone bad and Badu, in her unusual but usual creativity turns it into a middle eastern-ish masterpiece. You would think that you may have to wait for another three or four cuts before the next jam enters but the next cut "Back in the Day" takes you right there early. This cuts begins to set the tone for the whole CD which thus far continues to allow Badu to hold the crown of Motown head Kedar Massenburg's coined phrase "Neo Soul." Then Badu goes totally left with "I Want You" an 11 minute song that brings it on home. You don't have to listen to another single to know that Badu is serving the goods again.

"Woo" takes her back to her hip hop/Neo roots. This one will be a big concert hit as it will demand audience participation. My favorite cut is "The Grind" which talks about creative ways to earn that almighty dollar. Then there is the current lead single "Danger" which had to grow on me when I first heard it. The lyric makes the point before the music, then I got into it. "Think Twice" is another favorite and for those of us who are old enough to remember, Badu captures the essence of 70's songstress Sylvia Robinson to a T. The stand-out cut on the CD is Badu's remake of the Sequence 79' smash "Funk You Up." Ironically, the lead rapper on the single makes an appearance Angie Stone but this time she sings. Other participants include Queen Latifah and radio hostess/rapper Bahamadia. Overall this is a great CD.

Aretha Franklin

So Damn Happy

Arista

**

Recently, I watched Aretha Franklin on a PBS special dedicated to soul singers. Initially, while I was too young to appreciate the music from those days, I enjoyed hearing some of the older artist come back and sing some of their old songs from day's gone by. I was amazed at the condition that some of the performers were in, everything from missing teeth to gherri curls. But they all still had the goods. When the queen of soul came out, I must admit, I was shocked at her appearance (I know, I can be shallow at times) and could not really listen to her sing but the new CD provides the opportunity to pay closer attention. The Holding On cut written by Mary J. Blige IMMEDIATELY stood out and is by far the BEST cut on the CD. Over all the CD's production is very good and up-to-date but when I put in Aretha's cuts from the 70's I hear a different woman singing. It is certainly VERY difficult to market "seasoned" artists at this point in their careers, especially when radio has tightened up their playlists and there's so many artists competing for a space. The one thing that Aretha will always have in her corner is her "Queen of Soul" title given to her by radio DJ's in the 60's. This CD, however, needs a little more umph and the great production can't seem to make up for whatever's lacking in the overall product.

S U B S C R I B E

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concerns, dismay and frustrations with feeling that you have limited resources in this area (Atlanta) that often fails to generate the answers to YOUR needs and desires. Well, we hear you loud and clear and we understand the need for a publication like this to take YOU to the next level.

Keep in mind, our goal here is not to point fingers, spread hate or attack anyone but our goal IS to take a deep, long hard look at the issues that concern us all and simultaneously generate our love for each other and have a laugh and some thought-provoking conversation in the process.

If you have concerns, we don't mind addressing, investigating and even writing about them but you MUST offer solutions and options for making it a better situation.

There are a few rules in Noble that we would like to make clear up-front. First: we will never say "HIV" or "AIDS" (except in the disclaimer or advertisements) in this magazine. Why? Because at this point you are so accustomed to hearing and seeing it that you can pick the capitol letters out in a myriad of text with no problem. It's also something that many of us prefer to avoid. Unfortunately, we can't. Therefore, we will refer to it as "The Bug." There are many great trials and discoveries happening week to week that you will now have a resource to forward that information to you as well as other medical information that primarily affect you the African American and Latino man and woman. As we continue to staff up and prepare for 2004 we invite you to come grow with us. If you ever have any questions or comments, feel free to email us at

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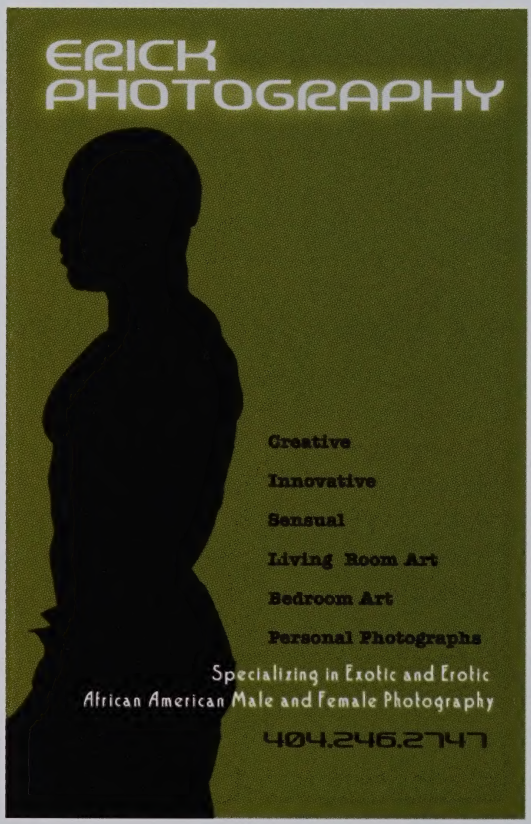

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tinues to destroy my self-esteem, this is what continues to keep me from seeing my own greatness and this is what keeps me from loving myself. It has also become the pattern of my life. Searching for what seems to consistently elude me.

I go in the store and do what I have probably done a million times

More importantly, as I get older I realize the more I do to please other people, the less I like myself

before. I act like it didn't happen. 'Na dawg, they didn't clock me, I try to tell myself' as I turn up the Hip Hop persona a notch or two and make sure I greet the first brother I see with "Sup Dawg." But who am I foolin' and why am I still wastin' my time doin' this I surmise as I make more room in the overstuffed box in my head that's already filled with so many lifetime low self-esteem packages, that I am running out of space.

Sure, I've been down the hip hop baggy jeans route, I'm a sports fan, I've been married and I've even tried to get rid of all my gay friends but none of that has ever worked for me. I have never seemed to be able to connect with other black men because they have been my greatest source of pain and joy at the same time. So why is it that I still love them so much, I question? More important, as I get older I realize the more I do to please other people, the less I like myself. Where is the middle? Where is the place where I can be who I am, not an effeminate man and not a hard core hip hop DL thug but MYSELF?

The first thing I always think about is how, every now and then, the brother who gives the only look of approval and I have met MANY times before. In a grocery store, at a basketball game, in the shoe store or even at the barbershop and I have immediately assumed he was straight before I even got to know him. These were often the brothers that wanted to be involved with me but I rejected them thinking it could not be real, but not before I allowed my other gay friends to see them with jealousy and envy. Then I would write him off and wonder why I had so few straight male friends or so few prospects for the kind of brother I wanted for myself.

I hate the cycle that I put MYSELF through. The cynical attitude that I have developed over the years that has guaranteed failure and disappointment. I want to divorce it.

SO WHAT IS THE SOLUTION? Be ME at all cost. It's a consistent process that will take some time but I can do it. I have to control my OWN thoughts and know who I AM without seeking the approval of anyone else again.

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